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APPLICATION NO.	FILING DATE	FIRST NAMED INVENTOR	ATTORNEY DOCKET NO.
09/194,700	03/04/99	WIDLUND	U 000515-141

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EXAMINER	
KIDWELL, M	
ART UNIT	PAPER NUMBER
3761	

DATE MAILED: 02/02/01 *H*

Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

Commissioner of Patents and Trademarks

Office Action Summary	Application No.	Applicant(s)	
	09/194,700	WIDLUND, URBAN	
	Examiner	Art Unit	
	Michele M. Kidwell	3761	

-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address --

Period for Reply

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE 3 MONTH(S) FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.

- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136 (a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- If the period for reply specified above is less than thirty (30) days, a reply within the statutory minimum of thirty (30) days will be considered timely.
- If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED (35 U.S.C. § 133).
- Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

Status

- 1) Responsive to communication(s) filed on 24 January 2001.
- 2a) This action is FINAL. 2b) This action is non-final.
- 3) Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11, 453 O.G. 213.

Disposition of Claims

- 4) Claim(s) 1-10 and 13-15 is/are pending in the application.
- 4a) Of the above claim(s) _____ is/are withdrawn from consideration.
- 5) Claim(s) _____ is/are allowed.
- 6) Claim(s) 1-10 and 13-15 is/are rejected.
- 7) Claim(s) _____ is/are objected to.
- 8) Claims _____ are subject to restriction and/or election requirement.

Application Papers

- 9) The specification is objected to by the Examiner.
- 10) The drawing(s) filed on _____ is/are objected to by the Examiner.
- 11) The proposed drawing correction filed on _____ is: a) approved b) disapproved.
- 12) The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner.

Priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119

- 13) Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).
- a) All b) Some * c) None of:
1. Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.
 2. Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. _____.
 3. Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).
- * See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.
- 14) Acknowledgement is made of a claim for domestic priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(e).

Attachment(s)

- 15) Notice of References Cited (PTO-892)
- 16) Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948)
- 17) Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO-1449) Paper No(s) _____
- 18) Interview Summary (PTO-413) Paper No(s) _____
- 19) Notice of Informal Patent Application (PTO-152)
- 20) Other: _____

DETAILED ACTION

Response to Amendment

Applicant's request for reconsideration of the finality of the rejection of the last Office action is persuasive and, therefore, the finality of that action is withdrawn. The applicant's argument with respect to the selectively hydrophilic topsheet has been considered persuasive. In light of the amendment submitted January 24, 20001, a new action on the merits follows.

Response to Arguments

Applicant's arguments with respect to claims 1 – 10 and 13 – 15 have been considered but are moot in view of the new ground(s) of rejection.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 103

The following is a quotation of 35 U.S.C. 103(a) which forms the basis for all obviousness rejections set forth in this Office action:

(a) A patent may not be obtained though the invention is not identically disclosed or described as set forth in section 102 of this title, if the differences between the subject matter sought to be patented and the prior art are such that the subject matter as a whole would have been obvious at the time the invention was made to a person having ordinary skill in the art to which said subject matter pertains. Patentability shall not be negated by the manner in which the invention was made.

Claims 1 – 6, 9 and 13 – 15 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Olsen (US 5,591,150), and further in view of Levesque (US 3,838,692).

As to claim 1, Olsen teaches an absorbent article (20) comprising a liquid-pervious surface layer (38), a liquid-impervious surface layer (40), and an absorbent body enclosed between the two surface layers (42) as set forth in col. 7, line 22 to col. 9, line 34. Olsen does not explicitly disclose an article which further exhibits a wetting region wherein the liquid-pervous surface layer within the wetting region is constituted of hydrophilic absorbent material and that remaining parts of the liquid-pervous surface layer are constituted of a hydrophobic material, however, Olsen does disclose that the topsheet layer may be rendered hydrophilic as set forth in col. 7, lines 52 – 54. Further, Levesque teaches a liner to be used with an absorbent article wherein the liner is constructed of hydrophobic material that may be treated with a surfactant in the wetting region in order to render the wetting region hydrophilic while the remaining surface remains hydrophobic as set forth in col. 6, line 8 to col. 8, line 19. It would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art to provide the liner of Levesque with the absorbent article of Olsen in order to compose an article that would discourage side leakage and subsequent staining.

With respect to claim 2, Olsen discloses an absorbent article wherein the article exhibits a hump, projecting from the liquid-pervious surface layer, wherein the location of the hump on the article at least partially coincides with the wetting region as set forth in figures 1, 3 and 4 and in col. 10, lines 25 – 27.

Regarding claims 3 and 4, Olsen teaches an absorbent article wherein the hydrophilic material in the liquid-pervious surface layer primarily consists of hydrophilic, absorbent fibers and/or hydrophilic, absorbent foam material as set forth in col. 16, line

50 to col. 17, line 9. Olsen teaches that the insert may be comprised of suitable blends of the types of materials described which would include foams and absorbent materials.

As to claims 5 and 6, Olsen discloses an absorbent article wherein the hydrophobic material in the liquid-pervious surface layer primarily consists of hydrophobic fibers and/or hydrophobic foam as set forth in col. 7, lines 21 – 36.

As to claim 9, Olsen discloses an absorbent article wherein the hydrophilic material in the liquid-pervious surface layer is constituted of a hydrophobic material that has been rendered hydrophilic as set forth in col. 7, lines 52 – 60.

Regarding claim 13, Olsen teaches an absorbent article wherein the article comprises a shaping member ("X" shaped flat insert) which, by means of influence from the forces which the article is subjected to during use, has the ability to bring the wetting region into contact with the mucous membranes of the user as set forth in col. 21, lines 36 – 49.

With reference to claim 14, Olsen teaches an absorbent article wherein the shaping member comprises compressions or folding notches as set forth in col. 11, lines 49 – 52.

As to claim 15, Olsen discloses an absorbent article wherein the shaping member comprises an insert as set forth in col. 21, lines 35 – 39.

Claims 7 and 8 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Olsen, in view of Levesque as applied to claims 1 – 6, 10 and 13 – 15 above, and further in view of Nishino et al (US 5,449,352).

As to claim 7, Olson in view of Levesque disclose an absorbent article meeting all of the limitations of the claim with the exception providing the absorbent article with a laminate of material. However, Nishino teaches an absorbent article characterized in that the liquid-pervious surface layer comprises a laminate of a first liquid-pervious, hydrophobic material layer arranged closest to the absorbent body, and a second liquid-pervious, hydrophilic material layer, of substantially the same extension as the wetting region of the article, arranged outside the first material layer and intended to bear on the body of the user in the wetting region during use as set forth in col. 6, line 63 to col. 7, line 21. It would be obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art to combine the device of Olsen with the invention of both Levesque and/or Nishino in order to develop a more effective absorbent article thereby reducing the opportunity for leakage.

As to claim 8, Olson in view of Levesque disclose an absorbent article meeting all of the limitations of the claim with the exception providing the absorbent article with a laminate of material further comprising an opening. However, Nishino teaches an absorbent article wherein the material is structured as claimed by the applicant and further exhibits an opening, of substantially the same extension as the wetting region of the article, through which the hydrophilic layer is exposed as set forth in col. 3, lines 22 – 29. It would be obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art to apply the concept of Nishino to the device of Olsen in view of Levesque in order to formulate an absorbent article with a higher absorbent capability.

Claim 10 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Olsen (US 5,591,150).

Regarding claim 10, it has already been disclosed by the invention of Olsen that the material in the liquid-pervious surface layer is comprised of a hydrophobic material which may be rendered hydrophilic as set forth in col. 7, lines 52 – 60. It would then be obvious to one having ordinary skill in the art that the initial hydrophobic material would provide same results as hydrophilic material that is rendered hydrophobic since the two materials are functionally equivalent.

Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to Michele M. Kidwell whose telephone number is 703-305-2941. The examiner can normally be reached on Monday thru Friday, 7:00am - 3:30pm.

If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, John G. Weiss can be reached on 703-308-2702. The fax phone numbers for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned are 703-305-3590 for regular communications and 703-305-3590 for After Final communications.

Any inquiry of a general nature or relating to the status of this application or proceeding should be directed to Monica Graves, Patent Analyst, whose telephone number is 703-305-3002.

Michele Kidwell
Michele Kidwell
January 30, 2001


Aaron J. Lewis
Primary Examiner